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REPORT OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL ON THE UNITED NATIONS DISENGAGEMENT OBSERVER FORCE

(for the period from 15 November 1997 to 14 May 1998)

I. INTRODUCTION

1. The present report gives an account of the activities of the United Nations Disengagement Observer Force (UNDOF) during the past six months in pursuance of the mandate contained in Security Council resolution 350 (1974) and extended by subsequent resolutions, most recently by resolution 1139 (1997) of 21 November 1997.

II. SITUATION IN THE AREA AND ACTIVITIES OF THE FORCE

2. During the period under review the ceasefire in the Israel-Syria sector was maintained without serious incident and the Force's area of operation remained calm. UNDOF supervised the area of separation by means of fixed positions and patrols to ensure that no military forces were in it. The Force also carried out fortnightly inspections of armament and force levels in the areas of limitation. Liaison officers from the party concerned accompanied the inspection teams. As in the past, both sides denied inspection teams access to some of their positions and imposed some restrictions on the Force's freedom of movement. UNDOF assisted the International Committee of the Red Cross with facilities for mail and the passage of persons through the area of separation. Within the means available, medical treatment was provided to the local population on request.

3. Since last November, earthworks have been under way in the area of separation for a large agricultural project funded by the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD). The Israel Defence Forces expressed concern about possible military implications of the work, particularly stone walls made up of rocks cleared from the fields. UNDOF discussed this with IFAD and the Syrian authorities, who have affirmed the purely civilian nature of the project. They have also agreed to make a number of adjustments, including the removal of stone walls in certain locations.

4. As of May 1998, UNDOF comprised 1,048 troops from Austria, Canada, Japan and Poland (460, 186, 45 and 357 troops respectively). By the end of May, a Slovakian platoon will replace an Austrian platoon as an integral part of the Austrian battalion. UNDOF was assisted in the performance of its tasks by 76 military observers detailed from the United Nations Truce Supervision Organization (UNTSO). Major-General David Stapleton continued as Force Commander. A map showing the Force's deployment is attached.

III. FINANCIAL ASPECTS

5. By its resolution 51/232 of 13 June 1997, the General Assembly appropriated to the Special Account for UNDOF an amount of $33,616,400 gross for the maintenance of the Force for the period from 1 July 1997 to 30 June 1998. The assessment of the appropriation, which is equivalent to $2,801,366 gross per month, is subject to the decision of the Security Council to extend the current mandate of UNDOF.

6. The budget proposed for the maintenance of the Force for the period from 1 July 1998 to 30 June 1999 (A/52/771/Add.1 and Corr.1) is currently under consideration by the General Assembly. Subject to the Assembly's decision, the cost of maintaining UNDOF at its authorized strength for that period would be $33,643,900 gross. This amount does not include UNDOF's share in the peacekeeping support account, which is also before the General Assembly.

7. Unpaid assessed contributions to the Special Account for UNDOF as at 30 April 1998 amounted to $50.3 million. Total outstanding assessed contributions for all peacekeeping operations as at 30 April 1998 amounted to $1.5 billion.

IV. IMPLEMENTATION OF SECURITY COUNCIL RESOLUTION 338 (1973)

8. In deciding in its resolution 1139 (1997) to renew the mandate of UNDOF for a further period of six months, the Security Council also called upon the parties concerned to implement immediately its resolution 338 (1973) and requested the Secretary-General to submit, at the end of the period, a report on the developments in the situation and the measures taken to implement that resolution. The search for a peaceful settlement in the Middle East and, in particular, the efforts undertaken at various levels to implement Security Council resolution 338 (1973) were dealt with in my report on the situation in the Middle East (A/52/467), submitted in pursuance of General Assembly resolution 51/28 of 4 December 1996.

V. OBSERVATIONS

9. UNDOF, which was established in May 1974 to supervise the ceasefire called for by the Security Council and the agreement on disengagement between Israeli and Syrian forces of 31 May 1974, has continued to perform its functions effectively, with the cooperation of the parties. The situation in the Israeli-Syrian sector has remained quiet and there has been no serious incident.

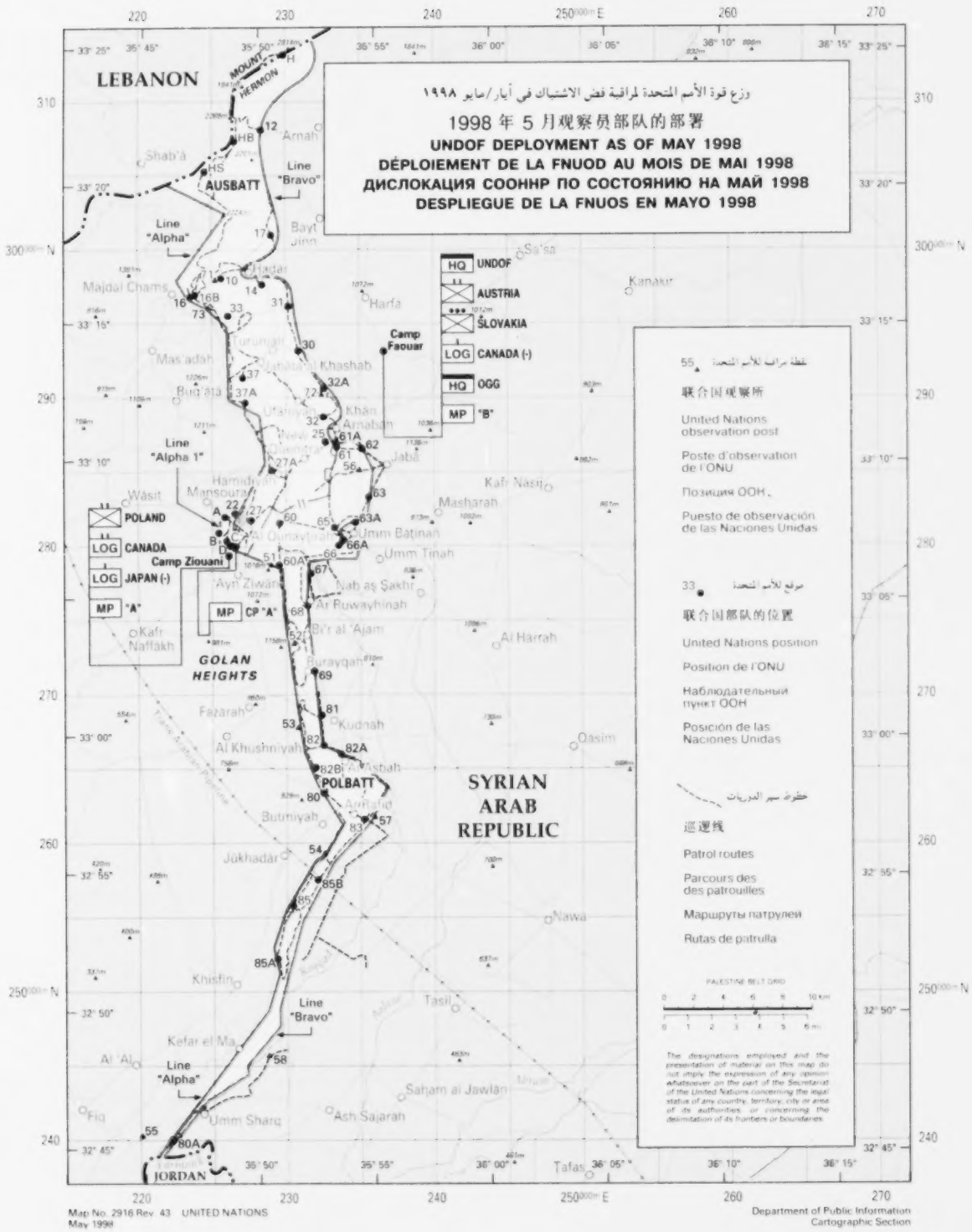
10. Despite the present quiet in the Israeli-Syrian sector, the situation in the Middle East continues to be potentially dangerous and is likely to remain so, unless and until a comprehensive settlement covering all aspects of the Middle East problem can be reached. I hope that determined efforts will be made by all concerned to tackle the problem in all its aspects, with a view to arriving at a just and durable peace settlement, as called for by the Security Council in its resolution 338 (1973).

11. In the prevailing circumstances, I consider the continued presence of UNDOF in the area to be essential. I therefore recommend that the Security Council extend the mandate of the Force for a further period of six months, until 30 November 1998. The Government of the Syrian Arab Republic has given its assent to the proposed extension. The Government of Israel has also expressed its agreement.

12. In making this recommendation, I must draw attention to the serious shortfall in the funding of the Force. At present, unpaid assessments amount to some $50.3 million. This sum, far larger than the current annual budget of UNDOF, represents money owed to Member States that contribute the troops who make up the Force. I appeal to all Member States to pay their assessments promptly and in full and to clear all remaining arrears.

13. When touring the Middle East earlier this year, I took the opportunity to visit UNDOF headquarters, where I met with the Force Commander and his senior military and civilian staff. This visit, which took place on 22 March, confirmed to me that UNDOF continues to carry out its important peacekeeping mandate in an exemplary manner.

14. In conclusion, I wish to pay tribute to Major-General David Stapleton and to the men and women under his command. They have performed with efficiency and devotion to duty the important tasks assigned to them by the Security Council. I take this opportunity to express my appreciation to the Governments contributing troops to UNDOF and to those that provide the UNTSO military observers assigned to the Force.


وزع قوة الأمم المتحدة لمراقبة فض الاشتباك في أيار/مايو ١٩٩٨
1998 年 5 月观察员部队的部署
UNDOF DEPLOYMENT AS OF MAY 1998
DÉPLOIEMENT DE LA FNUOD AU MOIS DE MAI 1998
ДИСЛОКАЦИЯ СООННР ПО СОСТОЯНИЮ НА МАЙ 1998
DESPLIEGUE DE LA FNUOS EN MAYO 1998
LEBANON
SYRIAN ARAB REPUBLIC
JORDAN
GOLAN HEIGHTS
MOUNT HERMON
AUSBATT
POLBATT
Camp Faouar
Camp Ziouani
Line "Alpha"
Line "Alpha 1"
Line "Bravo"
HQ UNDOF
AUSTRIA
ŠLOVAKIA
LOG CANADA (-)
HQ OGG
MP "B"
POLAND
LOG CANADA
LOG JAPAN (-)
MP "A"
MP CP "A"
United Nations observation post
Poste d'observation de l'ONU
Позиция ООН
Puesto de observación de las Naciones Unidas
United Nations position
Position de l'ONU
Наблюдательный пункт ООН
Posición de las Naciones Unidas
Patrol routes
Parcours des des patrouilles
Маршруты патрулей
Rutas de patrulla
PALESTINE BELT GRID
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